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FILE ONLY

HOWARD MAY BE IN MOSCOW, SOURCES SAY
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WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. officials tracked fugitive ex-CIA agent Edward L. Howard, charged with spying for the Soviet Union, to Helsinki, Finland, and presume that he is now in Moscow, sources said Thursday.

Two administration sources, who declined to be identified by name, said that Howard, who disappeared from his New Mexico home Sept. 21, was traced by FBI agents first to Dallas and Austin, Texas, and later to the Finnish capital, from which entry into the Soviet Union would be relatively easy.

Howard, 33, who was fired by the CIA in June, 1983, was charged by the FBI on Sept. 23 with selling U.S. intelligence secrets to Soviet KGB officials in Austria a year ago. Howard was forced to resign from the agency after a polygraph test suggested that he had used illegal drugs and engaged in petty theft. The resignation occurred shortly after he had turned down an assignment to Moscow with the CIA's clandestine service.

Earlier, government sources had reported that the United States had recently lost contact with a Soviet citizen who had for several years provided valuable information about high-technology electronics and aviation research.

On Thursday, the Wall Street Journal identified the missing agent as A.G. Tolkachev. The Journal said Tolkachev was an electronics expert at a military aviation institute in Moscow and had told the CIA about Soviet research on the electronic guidance of aircraft and on so-called "stealth" technology for avoiding radar detection.

Three government officials on Thursday, however, disputed the Journal's contention that Howard had tipped the Soviets off to Tolkachev and that Howard had been given Tolkachev's name because he was to be assigned the task of communicating with Tolkachev in Moscow.

One of these government sources said U.S. intelligence officials were not prepared to link the disappearance of the agent in Moscow to the Howard spying case. Another government official said the agent in Moscow may have been uncovered through the use of an invisible "spy dust" that the KGB has been using to track contacts between U.S. officials and Soviet citizens, or because Soviet agents observed so-called "dead drops" where agents in Moscow hide messages for one another.

A third government official questioned whether an agent as valuable as the one in Moscow would be assigned to a CIA officer as young and inexperienced as Howard.

U.S. officials were tipped off to Howard's alleged spying by Vitaly Yurchenko, the No. 5 officer in the Soviet KGB, who defected to the West in Rome more than two months ago.

Sources said Yurchenko provided an alias and enough descriptive information for U.S. agents to identify Howard as one of two U.S. officers who Yurchenko said were spying for the Soviet

Union.

U.S. sources have said that the second former U.S. intelligence official is still under surveillance by the FBI in an effort to obtain enough evidence to justify an arrest.